

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Rob Wittman issued the following statement regarding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) announcement of the release of \$10 million for the Commonwealth of Virginia in economic assistance for the Chesapeake Bay blue crab disaster.

"I am pleased to announce that NOAA has released \$10 million to Virginia to assist watermen and restore the blue crab fishery in the Bay. These funds will assist watermen and create programs to improve habitat and bring back the blue crab," said Wittman.

"With the news recently that blue crab numbers are beginning to return, these dollars will go a long way in making those numbers permanent," added Wittman.

Following the Virginia Marine Resource Commissions April 2008 announcement to reduce the Virginia blue crab harvest, Congressman Wittman petitioned Governor Kaine to seek assistance from NOAA to support watermen and restore the fishery. In December 2008, with Wittman's support NOAA declared a blue crab fishery disaster and announced the availability of federal aid for the Commonwealth. Wittman advocated to ensure Congress provide funding to restore the blue crab fishery and help watermen cope with harvest reductions. Additionally, Wittman coordinated with the Commonwealth and NOAA to ensure today's release of funding.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.